

2 10

THE

Divine Rights and Duties

OF THE

693.d /
10

Christian Priesthood,

As they are contain'd in the Holy Scriptures,

Deliver'd in a

Farewel SERMON,

At Morden-College upon Black-Heath,

The 29th of April, 1711,

By Sam. Afplin, M. A.

L O N D O N,

Printed for George Sawbridge, at the Three
Golden Flower-de-Luces in Little-Britain.

1711.

Price Three Pence.

V
it t
it g
of r
to v
Sub
oth
agr
hon
yet
aut
fla
if
not
an
an
tan
Tr
Ap
vit
th
pe
th
be
w
an
(t
ch
my
ac
w
V
of
in
de
co
U
F
at
P
A
m

The P R E F A C E.

WHEN I sat my self to compose this Sermon, which was done in some Hast, I had no other Design, than to preach it to my Auditory, and so lay it by. But the kind Reception that it generally met with from the Pulpit, and the Request of many of my Friends afterwards to print it, did alter my first Intentions, to venture it plain and unattir'd, as it is, to the World. The Subject of this Sermon in its own Nature, could not admit of any other Dress, but what is scriptural and grave, and in some Sense agreeable to the Solemnity of the Doctrines contain'd in it. But however short I have fallen of this, as I am very sensible I have, yet the Soundness and Sincerity of these Doctrines, back'd and authoriz'd by the holy Scriptures; and that, I presume, I can stand to, may serve at least to shew the Honesty of my Meaning, if not plead for my Inability in handling them.

The divine Origin and Office of the Christian Priesthood, is a noble and important Subject, full of Instructions to our selves, and Usefulness to our Flocks; but still when I consider how unanswerably it has been already prov'd, how copiously maintain'd, and how learnedly defended in many of the celebrated Tracts and Sermons of our modern Divines, I am at a Loss for an Apology for my self, why I should offer at (having neither Authority or Ability for) Things of this Nature. I therefore submit these little Essays, with all Humility and Reverence, to my Superiors, to stand either excus'd by their Candor, or corrected by their Judgments.

I should not indeed have attempted on this Argument, had it not been highly seasonable for the Place I preach'd it in: A Place wherein it has been my hard Hap to be punish'd for my Duties, and hated for my Office; no other Crime being laid against me, (that ever I yet heard of) but that I have conscientiously discharg'd my high Calling, and liv'd up to, and taught the Belief of my Soul, and the Principles of my Education. These indeed were accounted Crimes of an heinous Nature some while ago, when it was also my Lot to stand accus'd of the same high Crimes by the Visitors of the College that I left; who being Dissenters, and one of them most remarkably rigid, (I might have said black and cruel indeed) singl'd me out for a Sacrifice. Accordingly, and by Order, it was reported by a stupid, tho' wealthy Person, that was a constant Hearer of me, that I had preach'd Sedition and Policy. Upon this I was sent for by the Visitors, and bid to depart my Freehold, with all the Roughness and Inhumanity they could offer; and tho' no Cause could be assign'd against me, but that I had preach'd Sedition and Policy, (which, I suppose, were some Doctrines against Schism, and for Obedience to Superiors) I was made to defend an Ejection they sent me, by an expensive Tryal.

The PREFACE.

But there appearing no Title they had to eject me, the Ejection fell to the Ground. In the mean while, finding that they had no Claim against me, it was thought by them more prudent (especially as the Times began to alter apace) to quit all Pretensions of Right and Title to my Freehold, and to punish me after another Sort; and that was, (they being Dispensers of my Dyet and Salary) by starving and oppressing me. Accordingly I was stop't of my Salary, ty'd down to an hard Duty without any Provision, and confin'd to a solitary Place, naked of Comfort and Company, (save such as they countenanc'd, and kept there on Purpose to defame me.) Thus depriv'd of Food and Money, labouring too under a great Duty, and stript of all Manner of Conveniency, I remain'd for almost a whole Year together.

Such Measures as these taken with me, they thought would soon make me miserable and contemptible; and so they would, had not a greater Power than theirs frequently step't in to assist me. I must naturally have languish'd, and sunk under the Burden of those pitious Circumstances, had not the divine Providence, I say, interpos'd to relieve me, by putting it into the Hearts of some neighbouring Families and Gentlemen to subsist me, while these Clouds were overpast.

But I fear I have overshoot the Design of my Preface, which I intended not to vindicate my self, but to shew the Occasion of this Sermon. I declare that it is not any Apology or Vindication of my self, that I design by this Preface; nor would I here have mention'd a Tittle of these Things, but have bury'd them in eternal Silence, were I not brought under some Necessity to do it, for the Sake of those to whom this Sermon shall come, that they may the better apprehend the Spirit, Sense, and Application of it.

I know very well how little Good Apologeticks have done those who have suffer'd wrongfully enough; for how innocent soever their Life has been, if it is not join'd with Height of Station, eminent Learning, Courage, and Constancy, as bright as their Innocency, and capable of reflecting some Advantage to the Publick, the bare Repetitions of their Sufferings, tho' never so unjust, will look in the Eye of the World more like an Invektive, than an Apology.

This is Caveat enough for me, and therefore it made me stop short in the recounting of my Troubles; for being so worthless and insignificant a Person, I cannot pretend the least Qualifications for such Priviledges. All that I intended by repeating a small Part of my unhappy Story, was only to shew Strangers to it, the Occasion of the following Sermon; which is no more than a short Summary of those Doctrines that I have taught, from Time to Time, and of those Practices that I am bound to perform, and for both which, I am satisfy'd I have suffer'd, no visible Crime being alledg'd against me, nor by the Grace of God ever shall be.

For we preach not our selves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and our selves your Servants for Jesus Sake. 2 Cor. Chap. 4. Ver. 5.

THESE Words of St. Paul were occasion'd by the perfect Experience he had gain'd, in the Course of his Ministry, of the Manners, as also by that searching Insight that he had into the Minds, of Men ; but more particularly in the Genius of the *Corinthians*, a People covetous and deceitful. The Great Apostle had learn'd, from their Disposition, that when once Men make Shipwreck of Vertue, and offer up Conscience as a Sacrifice to the World, it would be equally difficult as dangerous, either to convince their Understanding, or reform their Wills. The Ministers of Christ might be never so honest in their Intentions, and sincere in their Preachings, to bring them over to the close Views of Justice and Righteousness ; yet he well knew, that their Endeavours should be canvass'd, and their Labours in the Gospel scann'd by the Rule of those unhappy Principles they were to reform.

St. Paul, in the Words I have read to you, seems to be more than jealous of this evil Humour ; and therefore he adviseth *Timothy*, *Sylvanus*, and *Lucas*, his Missionaries at *Corinth*, to tell that unrighteous People of the Sincerity of their preaching, to let them know, that they had renounc'd the hidden Things of Dishonesty, not walking in Craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by Manifestation of the Truth, *commending our selves to every Man's Conscience in the Sight of God*, Ver. 2.

And

And that if the preaching of the Gospel had no Influence upon them, the Gospel was not to be blam'd, but they themselves, as impenitent Hearers; for if *the Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost*, Ver. 3. That if the Light of the Gospel was not seen, it was because of their dark, and earthy, and groveling Affections, *That the God of this World had so blinded the Minds of them that believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine in upon them*, Ver. 4.

And lastly, That the Ministers of God were not to be reflected upon, if, after all their Pains and Labour, Men will not heed, or else slander and misrepresent their sacred Performances. *For we preach not our selves, but Jesus, &c.*

Which Words, I think, I may seasonably draw out into these following Particulars:

First, That the Ministers of Christ's Church, are by the Appointment of their divine Master Jesus Christ. *For we preach not our selves, but Jesus the Lord, &c.*

Secondly, That we preach him under those Rules and Branches of Duty, that he and his Apostles, by his Order and Inspiration, have directed.

Thirdly, That as long as we keep to these Duties, we cannot properly be said to preach our selves.

I shall handle these Particulars with as much Brevity as the Nature of them will allow me.

And then I shall apply them first to your selves, (and because it is the last Sermon I shall preach to you as your Minister) to my own particular Concernment.

But before I enter upon these Heads, I must beg Leave, according to the Advice of our Apostle, to inform you of my Sincerity in this Doctrine; and therefore I must here intreat you to believe, that I shall use no little Care to tell you the Truth upon these Heads, as I tender the Salvation of my own and

and your Souls. This awful Place where the eternal Majesty of God resides, raises in me no small Regard to this, as well as the vast Importance of the Subject.

First then, I am to prove, that the Ministers of Christ are by the Appointment of their divine Master, *because we preach not our selves, but Jesus, &c.*

The holy Scriptures are full of Places that unexceptionably and clearly make out the Order, the Succession, and Dignity of the Priesthood: And because they are so many, I shall select such a proper Number of them, as cannot, without the grossest Misapplication, be call'd in Question.

And *first*, It must be granted, that our blessed Lord did ordain *his twelve Apostles to preach the Kingdom of Heaven, and to baptize all Nations.*

And that after this, as you may see in the 10th Chapter of St. Luke, *he did institute and appoint seventy Disciples, as Labourers into his Harvest, sending them by two and two before him into every City, to prepare them for the Belief of himself by working Miracles, and preaching to them, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is come near unto you.*

To this Office you may observe our Saviour annexing very great and peculiar Priviledges: He invests them with an Exemption from bodily Labour, saying, *The Work-man is worthy of his Hire*; with a Power of absolving Penitents, and censuring Offenders; with the Administration of his Sacraments, and the Gift of Healing. He gave them Authority even to tread upon Scorpions, the very Demons themselves, and over all the Power of the Enemy. Their Persons, he taught, were to be esteem'd venerable in every Place of their Abode. He would have them reverenc'd as the Disciples of himself, their Lord and Master. He accounted the Reception of these his little ones, as the receiving of himself; all Honours pay'd to them, as pay'd to himself; and all Wrongs and Injuries that they should suffer

suffer in the Discharge of their Office, he took as done to himself; pronouncing sad Woe to them who should in the least offend them, even worse than beset the unhappy People of Sodom and Gomorrah.

On the contrary, assigning the greatest Rewards to those that should entertain them, tho' even with but a Cup of cold Water, for his Name Sake.

This was the State of the Church, while our Saviour was upon the Earth; and this every one must allow, if the 10th, 18th, and 10th Chapters of *St. Matthew* and *St. Luke*, be held as Gospel.

Now, this Discipline of the Church, after our Saviour's Ascension, we find carefully preserv'd by the Apostles; who having first fill'd up the Place of *Judas* the Apostate, set themselves with all their Vigour to pursue this Scheme which their Master left them, in appointing and ordaining, by the laying on of Hands, such Governors or Bishops amongst the proselyted *Jews* and *Heathens*, as were fit, by their Holiness and Ability, to ordain their Successors, and other Elders and Ministers in every City where they presided for instructing the new Converts, and converting others to the Faith in *Jesus*.

This we find to be the Apostles Care of the Churches, almost all over his respective Epistles; but especially in those two large Letters to the *Corinthians*, and in the two less to *Timothy* and *Titus*, *Bishops* of *Ephesus* and *Crete*.

Converts we read were made daily in every City, where the Apostles came; and that in such prodigious Numbers, as 2000 at one Sermon of *St. Peter's*. It was therefore necessary as well to supply their Mortality, as their Absence, (they not abiding constantly on the Spot, personally to oversee and govern those whom they had converted) that they should delegate and appoint such holy Men for these Purposes, by Imposition of Hands, with

with Power also to ordain Elders, who were faithful and good Men, for the propagating the Christian Church.

To prove this, I shall make choice of two or three notable Passages out of the Epistles of the great St. Paul, which must undeniably evince the Order, Succession, and Dignity of the Christian Priesthood.

And first for their Order: The Passage that I shall quote for this, is out of the *Hebrews* 5. 4. 1. 14. which clearly demonstrate, that the Ministers of Christ must be a distinct Order of Men; for the Apostle says, *No Man taketh this Honour of Ministering for Men in Things pertaining to God unto himself, but he that is call'd of God, as was Aaron*; that is, (as the best Comments upon these Words explain them) as the Priests and Levites under the Institution of Moses; so the Apostles and their Successors, and other Ministers of the Gospel, must be under the Institution of Jesus Christ.

The second Passage I quote, will prove their Succession. It is the Apostle's Command to *Timothy* and *Titus*, Bishops of *Ephesus* and *Crete*, *Tit.* 1. 5. 1 *Tim.* 5. 22. 2 *Tim.* 2. 2. I shall lay open these Places to one View, that the Sense may the more easily appear. *Ordain Elders in every City; and the Things that thou hast heard of the Apostles, the same commit to faithful Men, who shall teach others also. Lay Hands suddenly on no Man.* St. Paul here commissions *Titus* in general to exercise his Episcopal Authority, by Ordering of Ministers in every City of his Diocese.

But to *Timothy* he is more particular, where he enjoins him to transmit the Things, or the Discipline that he had receiv'd from the Apostles, (as an Author of great Note expounds it) and that he should carefully Hand down these Things to his Successors to faithful Men, who should be able to teach others the same Discipline. And for the good Management of so great a trust committed to him,

the Apostle warns him to take great Heed in making choice of such Persons, that he of his own Knowledge, or by the good Report of others, should think fit and able for so great an Undertaking. *Lay Hands suddenly on no Man.*

The third Place that I quote you, will sufficiently prove the Dignity of our Office. It is out of the 1 Cor. 1. 2. where the Apostle teaches us, *That those who have receiv'd this Ministry, are to be accounted of as the Stewards of the Mysteries of God;* which must certainly be an Office as far exceeding all secular Employments, as the Heavens are above the Earth, or the Affairs of God are above the Affairs of the World.

It was this Thought that probably led the great Apostle whom I have quoted, so to magnify and extol his Office, tho' by some carnal Minds he knew he was accounted *but as a Fool for glorying.*

It appears then from these Places that I have mention'd; and from innumerable others that I have not time to mention, it may appear, that our Saviour and his Apostles, and the Elders and Ministers who have been ordain'd in every City by them and their Successors, from the Beginning of Christianity, down to this very Day, are, and have been set apart from the rest of the faithful of Christ's Church, by the Authority and Appointment of *Jesus Christ*, for the Work of the Ministry, and to *set forward the Salvation of all Men.*

Now if these Things were not so, if the Commission of your Ministers were not from above, they ought indeed to be treated, (as some Men would have them treated) as a Pack of Deceivers and Impostors, and that of the worst Sort too, by pretending that they have a proper Power to reprove you for your Vices, to correct you for your Errors, and to score you out Rules for living, when they have no Commission or Authority to shew for it. If these Things were so,
we

we indeed should preach our selves, and not *Jesus* Christ, who hath given us no such Authority: But you see plainly to the contrary; you see plainly, I say, that we are bound by the Laws of God, not to betray our Calling, which in Truth is the Trust and Advantage of you his People, whom the Providence of God has committed to our Charge, by shewing and minding you of the Ways of Salvation, by a diligent, faithful, and conscientious Execution of our Offices under those several Branches and Rules of Duty, that our Master *Jesus*, and his Apostles, have set us.

For *Secondly*, We are to preach *Jesus* Christ under those Rules and Branches of Duty, that he and his Apostles, by his Order and Inspiration, have commanded us to observe and execute.

Were these Rules of the Duty of your Ministers, but truly and faithfully laid before you, I will be bold to say, That you would rather thank us for our Honesty to your Souls, than upbraid us with preaching of our selves; for by this Means, you would be of the same Opinion of the Apostle himself; that we are they *that must watch for your Souls, as they that must give an Account*; and that we may do it *with Joy, and not with Grief*, you will not call these following Rules of Duty, which the Holy Scriptures enjoin upon your Ministers to observe, upon Pain of their own Damnation, any preaching of themselves, but rather an upright and primitive Discharge of their Ministry, that they may, with the more Authority, and better Influence upon your Minds, preach the Divine Precepts of the Holy *Jesus* and his Apostles, who have given your Ministers these following Duties, as in Commission, to observe and execute.

And *first* then, *If we preach not our selves, but Jesus the Lord*, we must be faithful Stewards to that great Trust that our Master has committed to us,

i. e. as we are allow'd to be put in Trust with the Gospel, even so we are to speak, *not as pleasing Men, but God who tries our Hearts.*

He has honour'd us with being the Expositors of his Laws; we are therefore to see that we interpret them according to his Will. We are not to pervert and wiredraw the Meaning of his Word and Gospel, to compliment the vile Affections of sinful Men, but to fetch no other Sense from them, than what we know in our own Consciences is suitable to the Will and Intention of its Great Author.

The Gospel of the blessed Jesus is an inestimable Treasure, and we who are his Ministers, are appointed by our Master to be the Guardians and Stewards of it. Therefore, says the Apostle, *'Tis requir'd of Stewards that a Man be found faithful,* 1 Cor. 4. 2.

The Word *faithful* there, is to be understood true and just, as it stands oppos'd to Falshood and Injustice; so the Prophet *Jeremy*, *He that hath my Word, saith the Lord, let him speak my Word faithfully; or, as the Hebrew denotes it, truly,* Jer. 23. 28.

As a Temporal Steward cannot be reputed faithful to his Lord, if he has falsify'd his Accounts, or embezil'd or misapply'd his Estate; so we who are the Stewards of the true Riches, the invaluable Gospel of our Lord and Master, if we misapply its Revenues, and squander away its Income, what a wretched Account shall we give of our Stewardship? That is, to speak out of the Metaphor, If we that are your Ministers, for the Sake of any Worldly Good, either of Honour, Riches, or Preferment; nay, for Temporal Safety, should pervert, misconstrue, or misapply any Passage or Precept of the Gospel, what a wretched Account shall we give of the Souls of Men whom we have deluded to their own Perdition?

Therefore,

Therefore, my Brethren, you see it is our Duty, under this Head, to teach you faithfully, *not handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by Manifestation of the Truth, commending our selves to every Man's Conscience.* We are not to bring down the holy Scriptures to Mens Consciences, but rather to bring their Consciences up to the holy Scriptures, that we may convince and reform them, by the standing Oracles of eternal Truth. Neither at any Time are we to use flattering Words, nor to make God's Laws a Cloak for our Covetousness, nor to seek Glory of Men. *For we preach not our selves, but Jesus the Lord, and our, &c.*

A second Branch of our Duty, is, to set you a good Example of our own; *Being Ensamples to the Flock, that when the chief Shepherd shall come, we may receive a Crown of Glory, 1 Pet. 5. 4.* We are not only to preach you sound Doctrine, but to live up to our Doctrine; nay, to suffer for it, if the Will of God be so, that we may convince you how heartily we believe the Doctrines we teach you. A good Example must perswade, when all other Arguments fail. Therefore the Apostle counsels *Titus*, in all Things, to shew a Pattern of good Works in Doctrine, shewing *Uncorruptness, Gravity, Sincerity, sound Speech, that cannot be condemn'd, that he which is of the contrary Part may be asham'd, having no Evil to say of you, Tit. 2. 7, 8.*

The Apostle here doth not in the least denote, that the Ministers of Christ are to be blam'd, if they cannot escape the evil Reports of Men; for he himself well knew the Weight of a Minister of Christ, and that he could not discharge this Office faithfully, without the Chequer-Work of evil Report and good Report; nay, our Saviour himself had an Eye to this, when, by the Treatment he receiv'd for reproving Hypocrites, he saith unto his Disciples, *Woe be to you, when all Men speak well*
of

of you : As much as if he had said, Woe be to you, if you neglect your Duty, by not reproofing where Reproof is due, for fear of Men, and the Evil they shall say of you. It is an infallible Token of Remissness in Duty, where your Ministers carry off the Character of an easy moderate Sort of a Man, (as they say.) This is one of the false Colours of Satan, whereby he either allures or affrights us from our Duty.

Therefore by what the Apostle means by *Men, having no Evil to say of you, they may be asham'd*, is, as he explains it in another Place, having no real Evil to say of you, they may be asham'd that falsely accuse your good Conversation. *For it is better that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing,* 1 Pet. 3. 16, 17.

A third Branch of our Commission, is, *to preach you the real Doctrines of Peace*. What I mean by the real Doctrines of Peace, are such Doctrines as in their own Nature tend to establish it. As the Doctrine of Charity towards our Neighbours, Unity in Religion, and Obedience to Superiors.

For to give Success to the first, and that is, Charity to our Neighbours; in their Wants we are to relieve them with our Substance; in Afflictions, with our Counsel and Advice; and to do all the Good we can to one another, both in Body and Soul: And that an universal Charity may spread and extend it self amongst Men, every Soul in particular is to endeavour after those Things that shall make for Peace. And to this End, a good Understanding is to be kept up and cherish'd by us; whoever shall break this Band, ought to be discountenanc'd, and look'd upon as a common Enemy. Therefore we are to mark out, and avoid all such as suck in Slander, are greedy of Calumny, and feed upon Scandal; we are to expose such Make-baits as these in their proper Colours, black
as

as they are, to the publick View, as Incendiaries and publick Disturbers to the settled Quiet of Mankind, whether in the State, or in Neighbourhoods or Families, and lesser Societies of Men.

For the second, and that is, Unity in Religion, St. Paul tells us there must be *Heresies and Schisms among Men, that they which are approv'd, may be made manifest*; but Woe be to them by whom *these Offences come*. We are therefore to set out the Danger of Schism by proper Arguments, instructing those that oppose themselves, endeavouring to keep the *Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*.

For the third, and that is, Obedience to Superiors, in this, we are to put you frequently in Mind to yield *Subjection to all that are in Authority*; to the Prince as *supream*, and to all Governors, Parents, Pastors, and Masters, whether *Natural, Spiritual, or Civil*, that Men may study to be quiet, and do their own *Business*; and, if possibly, to live peaceably with all Men.

Charity to our Neighbours, Unity in Religion, and Obedience to Superiors, is the very Cement and Bond of Peace; and whatever other Doctrines Men may teach of Peace, that are not founded upon these Principles of Peace, I will presume to say, it is a preaching of *Peace*, where there is no *Peace*: 'Tis an hypocritical Way for designing Persons to embroil and wage War with the Shews of *Peace*, and under the Standard of *Union*.

The Enemies of *Peace*, are Pride, Covetousness, and Rebellion; and however Men may cover these wicked Principles, by godly and demure Pretences to Charity, *God will not be mock'd*; neither will Men that can form any Judgment of Things, be put upon at this Rate. It is just as if a Man, while he argues for the Unlawfulness of Duelling, should draw his Sword, and stab his Adversary, to shew his Hatred to Bloodshed.

A fourth Branch of our Duty, is discreet and impartial Reproof. This is a great Duty that your Ministers are entrusted with, and ought to be prudently manag'd. The same Measure of Reproof that is suitable to one Person, shall not be proportionable to another, tho' labouring under the same Distemper of Mind. We are therefore to consult the Temper and Dispositions of the Persons to be reprov'd, lest we apply corrosive Medicines, where Lenitives would do better ; or, on the contrary.

Our Reproofs are to be made up according to the Sex, Age, and Condition of our Patients, and the Quantity of it is to be duly regulated by the Circumstances of Manner, Person, Time, and Place, that we give no Offence in any Thing, *least the Ministry be blam'd, and least we should hinder the Gospel of Christ*, 2 Cor. 6. 3, 4. But I had like to have forgot one Thing we are to take Care above all, that our Reproof be sound, and agreeable to the Word of God ; for all Scripture being given by Inspiration, is useful for Correction and Reproof. Therefore we are to temper such sharp Medicines as these, as often as we have Occasion for them, with the Mildness of the Gospel: And as oft as we have Occasion for them, we must be sure to use them ; for we must not suffer any of our Flock to die under the Contagion of a vicious Humour, when we can discharge it by wholesome Applications ; neither must we fear displeasing them. Physick is sometimes necessary, tho' distastful ; and therefore we must give it them, tho' it goes down never so ungratefully. *We are to exhort and rebuke, says St. Paul, with all Boldness and Authority.* And if their Disease be desperate, we are, by the same Apostle's Advice, *to rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the Faith*, Tit. 1. 10, 11. And as our Reproofs must be wholesome, made up with the Ingredients of sound Doctrine, so must they be administer'd

minister'd impartially; *We are to observe these Things, without preferring one before another, making no Difference, doing nothing by Partiality, 1 Tim. 5. 21.*

A fifth Branch of our Commission, is, to speak the Things that become sound Doctrine, whether in Matters of Faith or Practice. In Matters of Faith we are to be as clear as the Revelations of them will admit, teaching nothing for the Objects of Faith, which is contrary to Sense, as the Papist *Transubstantiation*; or what is contrary to Reason, as the *Sectarian Doctrines* of Election and Grace, which opposeth the very Notion of a Deity, by making him transact with Mankind, as the Author of Evil, and thwarts the very Nature of his infinite Goodness and Justice. We are to teach for the Objects of Faith, such as these: The Being and Attributes of God; the Divinity, Incarnation, Resurrection, and Ascension of the blessed Jesus; the Personality of the holy Ghost; and the Subsistency of these three Persons in one common Nature of the God-head; which, tho' they are above our Reasons, they cannot be properly said to clash with, or contradict them.

In Matters of Practice, we are to clear up the Notices of Good and Evil; of Truth and Error, and to teach you, that no Faith can be justifying, unless sanctify'd by Repentance from dead Works, as the Fruits and Effects of a saving Faith; and therefore Repentance we are frequently to inculcate, as it rightly consists in Conviction, Contrition, and Amendment of Life. But above all, we are to acquaint you with the Danger of delaying Repentance to old Age, a Fit of Sickness, or a Deathbed. We are to broach no novel Doctrines of Repentance, worse than *Popery* it self, that shall flatter Men in their Iniquity, to use no Colours or Garniture in our Sermons, to court the Favour of Great Men, and to advance our own Fortunes. Our Exhortation

tion is not be Deceit, nor in Guile, but to describe the true unsophisticated Difference betwixt Vice and Vertue. *The Priests shall teach the People, says the Prophet, the Difference between the Holy and Profane, to cause them to discern between the Clean and the Unclean, Ezek. 44. 3. We, if we preach not our selves, but Jesus the Lord,* are to exhort and charge every one of you, from the Highest to the Lowest, (as a Father doth his Children) that you would walk worthy of God, *who has call'd us unto his Kingdom of Glory.*

A sixth Branch of our Commission, is, to be no Time-servers. *We are to preach the Word, to be instant in Season, out of Season, 2 Tim. 4. 2.*

That is, let the Occasion be never so dangerous, let the Times be never so corrupted, we are to be instant in sound Doctrine, to reprove and rebuke with all Authority, confirming the Souls of Men, and exhorting them to continue firm in the Faith, and sincere in the Obedience to the Precepts of the holy Jesus. Let *Popery*, let *Rebellion*, or *Atheism*, or any Thing as *bad* be in *Fashion*; let them be countenanc'd by Great Men; let them be the Custom of long *Practice* and large *Companies*; yet, if we preach the Lord Jesus in Sincerity, we are not to suffer his Faith and his Laws to be deprav'd and repeal'd, by wearing our selves the Badge and Livery of a *corrupted Age*. We are rather to stand in the Gap, and bear up against the Torrent; and if we cannot stem it, like the brave primitive Christians, with no other Resistance than strong Cryings and Tears, we are to perish in the Inundation.

The Doctrines of our Saviour and his Apostles, are always seasonable; and never more so, than when superseded by the Maxims of the Multitude.

Would it not be a very strange Thing should the College of Physicians be spending their whole Time in

in prescribing for the Ague, when the Plague at the same Time is raging amongst their Patients? As strange would it be, should the Ministers of Christ's-Church be preaching down the little Infirmities of human Nature, when at the same Time, Religion should be ready to expire under the Contagion of some Venomous Disease. No, upon these occasions it is the Duty of your Ministers according to God's Word, *to Cry aloud and spare not, to lift up their Voice like a Trumpet, to shew Israel of their transgression, and the House of Jacob their Sins. We are to speak the words of God to them, whether they will hear, or whether they would forbear, by precept upon precept, Line upon Line, here a Little and their a Little.* Ezek. 2. 7. Isaiah 28. 10.

A Last branch of our Commission is rightly and duly to administer God's Holy Sacraments. For, the First that we give an Account and expound the Nature of Infant Baptism, demonstrating the Contrary to be Novel, and Unwarrantable from the many undeniable Arguments we have from the Apostles and primitive Christians; from the Light of the Holy Scriptures; from the Customs of the *Jews*; and from the very Nature of Baptism it Self. For,

The Second, That we rightly and duey administer the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ; this being the very Top of our Devotion, the most solemn and sacred Performance of the Christian Church; the highest Priviledge it can be admitted to, in Imitation of the Patterns above, and of the greatest Sacrifice that ever was offer'd for the Children of Men; even the propitiatory Sacrifice of Jesus our Lord. We his Ministers, who are dignify'd with the solemnizing of this his inestimable Blessing, this his chiefest Pledge; and if I might say it without Offence, with this the broadest Seal of our Commission, are to take Care, as we shall answer it to the eternal Majesty of Hea-

ven, how we dispose of it, and for what Uses we dispend with it; whether we give it, as it is really design'd, to true and holy Penitents, for the Confirmation of Pardon to their past Sins, and to the repairing the Breaches of their Baptismal Vow and Covenant; or whether, thro' the Fear of Temporal Evil, we prostitute it to rash, wilful, and unrepenting Sinners; or through the Hopes of Temporal Advancements, give the Childrens Bread to Dogs and Mammonists: To serve the Occasions of the World, changing this divine Sacrament into an unholy Thing, prophaning it to the Abuses of Hypocrites, making it a Property to Faction, a Jest to Atheism, and the pitiful Salvo for all Heresy, Schism, and Irreligion. Good God! what an horrid Abuse is this of thy divine Mysteries! Let them look to it, that dare prophane them. It lies at their Doors. As for my Part I take this Opportunity solemnly to declare, (and I believe I am in the Company of many hundred honest and religious Clergy) I would not knowingly and wilfully administer the holy Communion to any Occasional Worldling, through the Fears of the most bitter Persecution, or for the Hopes of the most shining Preferment. No, if we preach not our selves, but are faithful Stewards to our blessed Lord's most holy Institution, we are thus to let you know our Master's Will; or rather ought we not to follow the Pattern of Discipline that he left his Church, who, tho' the very Miracle of Meekness, yet, when covetous Jews prophan'd the Temple of his Father, by making Merchandize of Sacrifices and Oblations, he overthrew their Money-Tables, and the Seats of them that sold Doves, driving them out, and saying, *My House shall be called the House of Prayer, but ye have made it a Den of Thieves*, Mat. 21. 12, 13.

If then our Saviour thus censur'd the Prophanation of the Jewish Sacrifice, and the villifying the Temple of his Father how ought his Ministers, who doubtless are to take him for the most perfect Pattern of Discipline, to drive out and censure those who dare not only to prophane the Temple, but the Altar, and the Memorials of that precious Sacrifice upon the Altar; that propitiatory Sacrifice that ransom'd and redeemed Mankind from the Guilt of original Sin, and the just Punishment due to it of eternal Damnation?

I have now run over some of the most important Branches of Duty which our Saviour hath committed to your Ministers. If there be any Objections that can be made against these Things, I refer you to the holy Scriptures for an Answer. The holy Scriptures are quick and piercing, *like any two-edg'd Sword*, and there is no standing against the Truth.

We are therefore, in the last Place, to keep and observe these Duties; we are to preach no other Doctrines than what we have receiv'd from the Word of God. These Duties of your Ministers, you see plainly are contain'd in them. I have fetch'd them from the Fountain of eternal Truth; you see what a weighty Office we have: You must be sensible; I am assur'd you must be sensible, that if we diligently and faithfully discharge this great Commission which I have now open'd to you, you must acquit us of preaching our selves. For having this Ministry given unto us, we must wait on our Ministering; we are set a-part from the rest of the Faithful, to teach the Ways of Truth and Godliness; nay, as the Oracles of God, as the Apostle hath it, *to preach to you the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Things concerning the Lord Jesus, with all Confidence and Boldness.*

For we preach not our selves, but are Workers together with him, by the Authority of sound Doctrine, by Reproof and Correction in Righteousness, to convince and reclaim you, that you receive not the Grace of God in vain. Pardon me this great Vehemence in pressing these Things to you: But I know you'll pardon me; in Charity you must, when you shall reflect on the bitter Woes, and that Measure of divine Wrath that must overtake those of your Ministers, who set easy to these Duties. Woe be to the Shepherds, says the Prophet, that feed not the Flock, that have not strengthen'd the Discour'd, neither heal'd that which was sick. Woe be to the Priests that have violated my Laws, and have prophan'd my holy Things, Ezek. 22. 26. 34. 2, 3.

I am almost perswaded, that all of you that hear me this Day, if you believe the Word of God to be true, will not only hereafter be more forward to receive the Instructions and Admonitions of your Ministers, but will also condemn those that

that shall either terrify or allure us from these necessary Duties ; and that as well for the Sake of your own eternal Welfare, as out of Pity to ours.

Hear what God Almighty sayeth both unto us and you by his Prophet, Ezek. 3. 17, 18, 19. The Words are these ; *When I say to the Wicked he shall surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked Man from his wicked Way, to save his Life ; the same wicked Man shall die in his Iniquity, but his Blood will I require at his Hands. Yet, if thou warn the wicked Man, and he turn not from his Wickedness, he shall die in his Iniquity, but thou hast deliver'd thy Soul.* The Words are so plain, that I shall leave them upon your Consciences, without any Comment upon them.

Give me Leave now, according to my Promise, to make some short Applications of these Things, both to my self and you.

And *first* then to your selves ; and here I beseech you to consider once more the weighty Office of your Ministers ; if not for their Sakes, yet for the Benefit of your own Salvation. The Doctrines that we are authoriz'd to Preach, are plainly contain'd in the Word of God, and are such as are worthy of him, and likely to proceed from him, and tend to the Good and Happiness of you all, to make you really better, and to qualify you for that Happiness which God hath promis'd all holy Souls. The Doctrines I have taught you all the while I have been your Minister, are such ; and, I appeal to your Consciences, nay, to the great God, who is infinitely a better Judge of my Heart, whether I have preach'd any other Doctrines. Such as I have receiv'd from my great Master, such I have given unto you : And being now I am to see your *Faces no more* as your Minister, I thought it was my Duty to collect them in one View, that what I have said to you at any Time in private, or preach'd to you out of the Pulpit, may be left the deeper upon your Consciences. Pray receive them ; treasure them up in your Hearts ; receive them, if not for my Sake, yet for *Jesus Sake*, nay, for your own Sakes ; for they will encourage you to continue stedfast in the Truth and Practice of your holy Religion, to hold fast your Faith without wavering, and for all this to bring you to *Christ's Kingdom of Glory*.

Give me leave to put you in remembrance of one Thing more under this Head, and that is to *behave* your selves well to the Minister that shall *succeed* me ; for we are those who are Appointed to serve you for the best and noblest Purposes, your immortal Souls, and are Ambassadors and Stewards of Christ, to transact and negotiate with you about the business of Heaven. Therefore we beseech you says the Apostle, *To know them,*

them that are over you, that labour among you, and Admonish you, and esteem very highly for their Work's sake: But pray Consider, That tho' we are of so high a Calling, yet we carry this Treasure in Earthen Vessels, we are subject to the same Infirmities of other Men, and liable to like passions with you; and therefore should you discountenance, despise, and persecute your Ministers for doing their Duties, they may be apt to sink under them in Compliance to your Lusts, and for fear of worldly Evils. And this is very probable, for no doubt on'r, your Ministers are as sensible of Ease and a comfortable Way of Living as your selves; and those of us who are affected with too great a Sense of Ease, may not be overfond to quit it, and turn Confessors for their Duty. But should your Ministers that they might live easily among you, flatter you in your Sins for fear of the Mischief you will make them; should they make a Compliment of the Gospel of the Holy Jesus to your Carnal Affections; should they prophesy to you according to your own vain Hearts; should they speak to you smooth Things, and prophesy Deceits for fear of you. What a wretched Account will be given both by them and you, at the Day of Judgment? They for betraying your Souls; and you for tempting them to it.

I should before this Time have put a Period to my Discourse, which is the Longest that ever I made in my Life; but being unwilling to keep back any Thing that is profitable for you, especially now I am to leave you, I have the good Hopes to think that you will count the Length of my Sermon the only Fault of it.

I am now to address my self to you, that have been my peculiar Charge.

And I think I can do it in Words, very near the Apostles. You may remember that for above the Space of three Years, I have not ceas'd to warn you Night and Day, I have not Shun'd, to declare unto you all the Council of God.

You know that from the first Day that I was your Minister, after what Manner I have been with you at all Seasons, wherefore I take you to record this Day, whether you can accuse me of either false Doctrine, a vicious Life, or an immoral Action.

Indeed it has been my Lot to be no little Sufferer among you, and tho' many temptations have befallen me by the laying in wait of those who for no Cause have been my Enemies; yet, I bless God, he has not suffer'd me to be tempted beyond my Ability, or has there any Temptations befallen me, but what are common to Men of my Profession. However, the Sense that I have of my own Weakness and Insufficiency, if the providence of God did not, is enough to tell me, that God

Almighty

Almighty who careth for me, and who (I trust) will still care for me, has assisted me in the whole Course of my Troubles.

I shall not here tire out your Patience by repeating the Nature and Causes of my Afflictions, neither is it proper in this sacred Place. I heartily forgive them for my own Part, and do Commend them to God Almighty, who judgeth Righteously. None of these Things move me, neither count I my Life dear unto my self, so that I might finish my Course with Joy, and the Ministry which I have receiv'd from the Lord Jesus.

But one Thing I cannot, I must not pass over, being ty'd by all the bonds of Duty and Gratitude, to Remember it, and never to forget it. The Multitude of kindnesses that I have receiv'd from many Neighbouring Families, and others of these Parts. To whose Christian beneficence and Charity, I owe the greatell share of Comfort in this Place. I have been taken into their Friendships; been fed by them at their Tables, been supply'd by them in my Necessities: Nay, I must justly say, having no Fortune of my own, they have for the Space of a whole Year, Actually kept me from Starving.

May my blessed Master the Holy Jesus bless and reward them for it, who because they have done these good Things to me, tho' one of the meanest and vilest of his Servants, he will take them as done unto himself.

I shall not now keep you any longer, but take my leave of you, and dismiss you with these Apostolical Precepts. I direct them to you that have been my Charge in particular, and to every Soul here in General. Remember them that have the Rule over you in the Lord, who have spoken unto you the Word of God, whose faith follow, considering the End of their Conversation.

Let your Love be without Dissimulation. Love not one another in Word, neither in Tongue, but indeed and in Truth. See that ye Love one another with a pure Heart fervently, and with Love unfeign'd; and the Peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which consists in a sound Faith, and a pure Conscience, be with you, protect and keep you for ever and ever. Amen.

F I N I S.